

# Adolescent girl's nutrition in Bangladesh perspective

## Editorial

Adolescence is a period of opportunity, period of threat and a period of rapid physical growth which transits between childhood and adulthood and finally occupies a crucial position in the life of human beings. Though adolescents have the lowest mortality among the different age groups but they always get low priority in terms of nutrition, health check-up, psychological state etc. Health and nutrition of the girls of today will affect the health and survival of the future generation. Adolescent girls are the mothers of tomorrow and no edifice can be built on a foundation which is so weak. In spite of impressive gain in the field of health and nutrition, significant proportion of young people in developing countries is under-nourished. The effect of earlier insult is visible in the adolescent age particularly in girls. The recent trend of recognizing adolescent girls as a separate as well as the crucial target group is heartening. Yet, sustained efforts are needed at the national level not only to develop comprehensive and innovative programmes for this segment of our population but also ensure their effective implementation. It is expected that such a holistic approach for the development of adolescent girls will gradually improve their nutritional status as well as enhance their nutrition/health knowledge and social awareness. Adolescent girls, constituting nearly one tenth of the population, form an extremely important segment of our society. These girls need special care in view of their role in shaping the health and wellbeing of the present as well as future generations. However, in India, young girls have been sadly neglected and most of them reach adolescence through years of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and lack of adequate nutrition / health care. The ill effects of these deprivations are further aggravated by gender discrimination - both at the household and the community level. This results in a poor nutrition and health status, besides a low social status of these girls. This situation is quite similar in Bangladesh and need to be more explored. Various studies have indicated that a large number of girls, especially the ones from rural poor communities, are either illiterate or school dropouts, and their mobility is severely restricted. Further, these girls have limited exposure to the facts of life and are often uninformed about the utilization of available services. Still there is a

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ray of hope as adolescence provides a unique opportunity to trap the development potential of girls through proper interventions. There is a dire need for more research in 'public' nutrition in general, and for research focusing on adolescents in particular. There is a great need not only for research, but also for dissemination of research findings. Success stories are not many in the published material on those for nutrition, and yet, they are important as a means of spreading best practices in the field. Intervention rather than observational studies are now needed for progress in effectively addressing nutrition-related needs of adolescents.

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## Conflict of interest

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